United Nations E/CN.18/2005/3/Add.8

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
17 March 2005

Original: English

United Nations Forum on Forests
Fifth session
New York, 16-27 May 2005
Item 8 of the provisional agenda*
Multi-stakeholder dialogue

Multi-stakeholder dialogue

Note by the Secretariat**

Addendum

Discussion paper contributed by the scientific and technological communities major group***

Summary

The present discussion paper is a contribution by two networks of forestry research institutions, the Forestry Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa (FORNESSA) and the Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions (APAFRI), in close collaboration with the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO). The paper (a) briefly describes FORNESSA and APAFRI, which provided the materials for the development of the paper; (b) assesses the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IPF/IFF), focusing on the most relevant proposals for the scientific and technological communities major group, the level of implementation of the relevant proposals at the global, regional, subregional and country levels, as well as obstacles and constraints to implementation; (c) assesses priority areas for action, with a focus on the most pressing proposals, and how future international arrangements could better address them; (d) recommends achievable goals and targets based on the assessed levels of implementation of the relevant and prioritized IPF/IFF proposals for action; and finally (e) provides concluding remarks and a summary of major recommendations.

* E/CN.18/2005/1.

** The present note was delayed owing to extended consultations within the scientific major group.

*** Prepared by two networks of forestry research institutions in Africa (FORNESSA) and Asia (APAFRI), in close collaboration with the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO).

05-27478 (E) 060405

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I. Introduction

1. The present discussion paper is a contribution by the scientific and technological communities major group to the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests. It is prepared on the basis of information gathered by the Forestry Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa (FORNESSA) and the Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions (APAFRI).

2. FORNESSA is a federation of three subregional forestry research networks: the Association of Forestry Research Institutions in Eastern Africa (AFREA), the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD) and the forestry research and training unit of the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) Directorate within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) secretariat. Its goal is to strengthen forestry research in sub-Saharan Africa for greater impact on the management and conservation of forest and tree resources for sustainable development.

3. APAFRI is a non-governmental organization comprising institutions in the Asia-Pacific region that are actively engaged in forestry and forestry-related research. Its vision is to be recognized as a dynamic, strong and self-reliant forestry research association in the Asia-Pacific region that promotes innovative research and development efforts in support of national, regional and community development.

4. The paper looks at the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IPF/IFF) proposals for action and considers those that are specific to forest science and technology. Progress in their implementation has been assessed mainly for Africa and the Asia-Pacific region, focusing on constraints, success stories and relevance in addressing the pressing problems, needs and concerns of the scientific and technological community.

5. The paper concludes with recommendations regarding achievable goals and targets in the light of the assessment of the implementation levels of the proposals for action.

II. Brief assessment of the implementation of relevant Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action

A. Relevant Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals to the scientific and technological communities major group

6. The approximately 270 proposals, collectively known as the IPF/IFF proposals for action,[1] are all important globally as they are intended to "provide Governments, international organizations, private sector entities and all other major groups guidance on how to further develop, implement and coordinate national and international policies on sustainable forest management".[2] For the scientific and

[1] See E/CN.17/1997/2 and E/CN.17/2000/14.

[2] See http://www.un.org/esa/forests.

technological communities major group, however, 24 of the proposals specifically pertain to scientific forest-related knowledge. These relevant proposals fit into five clearly defined areas of action (see table below).

Summary of Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action related to scientific forest-related knowledge

Area of action	*Summary of proposals for action*
Interaction between science and policy	Two IFF proposals (see E/CN.17/2000/14, paras. 96 (c) and 98 (b)) are made in this area to: (i) Improve linkages between science and policy processes; (ii) Involve guidance from all interested parties.
Address the knowledge gaps and set research priorities	Six IPF proposals (see E/CN.17/1997/12, paras. 46 (g), 50 (b), 94 (a), 94 (b), 94 (d) and 104 (c)) and four IFF proposals (see E/CN.17/2000/14, paras. 96 (a), 96 (d), 97 (d) and 98 (a)) are made in this area to: (i) Set research needs and priorities nationally and globally; (ii) Address knowledge gaps; (iii) Promote and strengthen research efforts in support of sustainable forest management.
Promote efficient sharing of information and strengthen networks	Three IPF proposals (see E/CN.17/1997/12, paras. 58 (b) (vii), 94 (a) (ii) and 94 (a) (iii)) and two IFF proposals (see E/CN.17/2000/14, paras. 97 (c) and 98 (c)) are made in this area to allow results in information to be available for all users to support decision-making, develop new and innovative means of disseminating information and technologies and promote and make use of existing networks, institutions and mechanisms in efficient sharing of information.
Strengthen research capacity and mobilize funding for forest research	Two IPF proposals (see E/CN.17/1997/12, paras. 94 (a) (iv) and 94 (c)) and three IFF proposals (see E/CN.17/2000/14, paras. 96 (b), 97 (a) and 97 (b)) are made in this area to examine new ways to mobilize funding for forest research to accomplish its objectives and build capacity at the national, regional and global levels.
Apply participatory mechanisms to integrate research into planning processes	One IPF proposal (see E/CN.17/1997/12, para. 17 (e)) is made in this area as a transversal item for all areas.

B. Level of the implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals related to science and technology

7. In assessing progress in this area, the report of the Secretary-General on scientific forest-related knowledge, prepared for the fourth session of the United

Nations Forum on Forests, included the following observation: "progress in strengthening science and policy interaction has been made at the international level, but the degree of interaction and the extent to which forest-related scientific knowledge is used for policy-making varies considerably among countries and tends to be low in particular in developing countries" (E/CN.18/2004/9). This observation remains largely valid today. Nevertheless, a number of significant and encouraging initiatives towards creating an enabling environment for the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and other international arrangements on the environment have been undertaken at the international, regional, subregional and national levels.

Arrangements at the international level

8. At the global level, several innovative initiatives have been established in recent years to facilitate communication between scientists, policy makers and other stakeholders in view of improving science-policy interaction. These initiatives include: (a) intergovernmental forums and subsidiary advisory bodies; (b) task-oriented expert groups set up by forest-related global conventions, instruments and organizations; (c) the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF); (d) the multi-stakeholders dialogue; and (e) increased cooperation between the scientific community and international organizations, leading to key informative publications, such as the *State of the World's Forests*, issued by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and *ATO/ITTO principles, criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of African natural tropical forests*, issued jointly by the International Tropical Timber Organization and the African Timber Organization.

Arrangements at the regional and subregional levels

9. At the regional and subregional levels, progress in implementing the IPF/IFF proposals of interest to the scientific and technological communities major group has been observed as well as through a number of significant initiatives in the following areas:

(a) Improving the interaction between science and policy:

(i) The International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) task force on science/policy interface has produced guidelines for research organizations and research scientists providing best practices for the interaction between the science community and policy makers;

(ii) IUFRO-Special Programme for Developing Countries (SPDC) has initiated a training module for forest scientists on the theme "International forest-related initiatives and agreements and their implementation in the context of national forest programmes: linking research and science with practice";

(iii) The IUFRO task force on public relations for forest science has produced a public relations manual that will be used in another new IUFRO-SPDC training module on the theme "Communicating forest research: making science work for policy and management";

(iv) The ongoing work of the IUFRO special project on world forests, society and environment includes compiling a book on forests in the global balance

and a policy brief to be submitted at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests;

(b) Promoting efficient sharing of information and strengthening networks:

(i) Establishment of the Global Forest Information Service (GFIS) as a collaborative partnership on forests initiative. The Service is operated by IUFRO, FAO, the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and other national and international forestry expert institutions;

(ii) GFIS Africa, with five GFIS service centres established strategically throughout Africa (in Dakar, for the benefit of the Sahelien countries of West and Central Africa; in Kumasi, Ghana, to cater to the humid coastal countries of West Africa; in Kenya for the East African countries; in Libreville for the countries of the Congo Basin; and in Harare for the Southern African countries);

(iii) GFIS Asia Pacific, currently being developed;

(iv) Regional and subregional forest information and research networks have been established to strengthen research capacities and promote collaboration and efficient provision and sharing of relevant information, with the overall goal of strengthening science-policy interaction for sustainable forest management. FORNESSA, the African Forestry Research Network (AFORNET), the Sub-Saharan Africa Forest Genetic Resources Network (SAFORGEN), established by the International Plant Genetic Resource Institute (IPGRI), among others; and the Asia Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme (APFORGEN), established by IPGRI and APAFRI and currently hosted by APAFRI in the Asia-Pacific region, are but a few examples of regional forest research-related networks. AFREA (in Eastern Africa), CORAF/WECARD (in West and Central Africa) and the SADC-FANR research and training unit (in Southern Africa) are outstanding examples of subregional forest research networks;

(c) Strengthening research capacity and mobilize funding for research:

(i) IUFRO-SPDC self-learning courses in research management, proposal preparation and information management;

(ii) Training efforts by the International Foundation for Science, the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), etc.;

(d) Applying participatory mechanisms to integrate research into planning processes:

(i) Promotion of multi-stakeholder learning initiatives through FAO, the International Center for development oriented Research in Agriculture (ICRA), the European Tropical Forest Research Network (ETFRN), IUFRO, FORNESSA, the Centro Agronomia Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE) and APAFRI;

(ii) The forestry outlook study for Africa initiated by FAO on the recommendations of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC) and the Near East Forestry Commission, in partnership with the countries and institutions (such as the African Development Bank, the United Nations

Development Programme and the World Bank) concerned about forests and forestry in the region, is a participatory mechanism with great potential for forest sector planning, investment and development;

(iii) The Asia-Pacific forestry sector outlook study, recommended at the sixteenth session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) in 1996 and coordinated by the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, which was concluded in 1997, is another participatory mechanism with great potential for forest sector planning, investment and development;

(iv) The national forest programmes promoting participatory approaches in planning and managing the forest sector for sustainable development;

(v) The recently initiated national forest programme facility, an innovative partnership among developing countries, leading international partners and FAO to support national forest programmes through capacity development and information-sharing, is another outstanding example;

(c) Promoting strong regional forestry policy dialogue:

(i) The FAO regional forestry commissions provide a viable forum for regional policy dialogue, which could contribute to creating an enabling environment for the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action;

(ii) The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission, which is the largest forestry forum at the highest forest policy level on the African continent, is an example. Through AFWC, heads of forestry and wildlife services meet every two years to discuss issues of regional interest, exchange information, experiences and technologies; provide advice to FAO and Governments on priorities and programmes; and help develop regional inputs to the global forest dialogue, among other tasks;

(iii) At the fourteenth session of AFWC, held in February 2004 in Accra, a workshop on implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action in Africa was held, at which participants recommended, among other things, that AFWC provide a forum for strong regional forestry policy dialogue, including preparations for future global meetings; a common African position at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests; and the sharing of experiences in implementation;

(iv) In an effort to facilitate the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action in the Asia-Pacific region, APFC recommended at its twentieth session that:

- APFC member countries take further action to implement internationally agreed actions related to forests, especially the IPF/IFF proposals for action;
- FAO help convey member country experiences in working towards sustainable forest management, including successes and impediments, to the Committee on Forestry and the United Nations Forum on Forests;
- APFC member countries actively participate and provide forestry expertise in the intergovernmental negotiations related to forests, especially the United Nations Forum on Forests and the conventions on biodiversity, desertification and climate change;

- For thorough regional preparations prior to the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in 2005, at which future international arrangements on forests will be decided upon, FAO should examine the possibility of organizing an intersessional meeting for this purpose or provide other mechanisms to assist countries' preparations;

- FAO and other CPF members should continue supporting member countries in implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action through effective national forest programmes, consistent with the recommendations of the Committee on Forestry and various other international forums;

(f) Emergence of regional and subregional coordinating initiatives

(i) A number of regional and subregional partnership initiatives have emerged in recent years to create platforms for coordination and consultation between countries and donor agencies and development partners.

(ii) The New Partnership for Africa's Development and its environmental action plan, which covers mapping and inventory, monitoring and assessment, national forest programmes, protected areas, the private sector, and illegal logging and poaching, is an example.

(iii) The Conférence sur les écosystèmes de forêts denses humides d'Afrique centrale (Brazzaville Process) and the Conference des ministres en charges des forêts d'Afrique centrale, formed following the Summit of Central African Heads of State on conservation and sustainable management of tropical forests, held in Yaoundé, in 1999, which contribute to the harmonization of national forest policies and actions, are but two outstanding examples at the subregional level in the Congo Basin, the second largest contiguous tract of tropical forest in the world;

(iv) The Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, which harmonizes the efforts of its nine member States and calls upon its member countries to bring scientific information to bear in their fight against desertification and drought, is another subregional initiative contributing directly and/or indirectly to the implementation of international arrangements on forests and the environment, including the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

Arrangements at the national and subnational levels

10. It is at the national and subnational levels on the ground that efforts to implement the IPF/IFF proposals for actions in general, and particularly those related to science and technology, are the least visible.

11. Nevertheless, African countries, as well as countries in the Asia-Pacific region, recognize the need to embrace the IPF/IFF proposals for action as an important advance towards sustainable forest management and a basis on which to move from political dialogue to action on the ground, addressing such issues as deforestation and forest degradation, forest health and productivity, conservation and protection of all types of forests, rehabilitation and maintenance of forest cover, public participation and such cross-cutting issues as capacity-building, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, international trade and mobilization of financial resources.

12. It is observed in both Africa and the Asia-Pacific region that many countries have already integrated or are in the process of integrating many relevant IPF/IFF proposals into their national forest programmes. For example, the need to shift from a centralized forest management regime to a decentralized one, whereby power, responsibilities and resources are devolved by the central State to lower territorial entities and locally elected bodies, is widely accepted in the two regions. One fundamental implication of this is the opportunity that has opened up for public participation and for the research needs of the most vulnerable of society to be fully included in the prioritization process. Accordingly, the new IUFRO-SPDC training module for forest scientists, on the theme "International forest-related initiatives and agreements and their implementation in the context of national forest programmes", aims to strengthen the ability of forest scientists to contribute to national forest programme processes.

13. Despite plans at the national level, real tangible action and results on the ground at the subnational level are not yet fully visible owing to a number of constraints, which are identified in the next section. Many important practical actions are being implemented on the ground at the local level by national and international NGOs such as the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, the World Wildlife Fund, the World Conservation Union and FAO, through its technical support to countries. Nevertheless, these actions remain individualized projects, which are limited in time, space and number of beneficiaries, while the problems (such as biodiversity loss, land deforestation and degradation, etc.) that they are supposed to address result from the land and resource use practices of large numbers of people distributed over large areas and acting over a long period of time.

C. Obstacles and constraints to implementation on the ground

14. In general, efforts to implement the IPF/IFF proposals for action on the ground, where they matter most, have been hampered mainly by two factors: lack of awareness of the IPF/IFF processes and outcomes and lack of human, technical and financial capacities to effectively prioritize and implement the proposals. This assessment is valid for both Africa and the Asia-Pacific region, in particular for the scientific and technological community.

15. It is widely argued that the economic difficulties that most African countries face, coupled with weak forestry institutions, hinder attempts to sustain sustainable forest management efforts. With 32 countries classified as heavily indebted poor countries, African policy makers are preoccupied with finding ways to alleviate this burden and provide for the basic needs of their populations.

16. At a workshop held before its recent session, the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission determined that the limited capacity to implement the proposals and to report on progress, owing particularly to overwhelming reporting requests from international processes, constituted a major constraint.

17. Other constraints related to research capacity include: insufficient collaborative research; poor linkages between research and intended users; inadequate flow of information and access to scientific literature; low levels of remuneration for research and a lack of continuity in support for research

programmes.[3] Another issue of profound concern for future research capacity (e.g. in Eastern and Southern Africa) is the continued erosion of human technical capacity owing to HIV/AIDS.

III. Priority areas for action

A. Most urgent proposals for action

18. Of the existing proposals for action, the scientific and technological communities major group considers two IPF proposals (see E/CN.17/1997/12, paras. 94 (a) (iv) and 94 (c)) and three IFF proposals (see E/CN.17/2000/14, paras. 96 (b), 97 (a) and 97 (b)) to be the most urgent ones as they concern the most binding constraint to implementing all the other proposals related to the scientific and technological communities major group.

19. Indeed, if research capacities are strengthened and funds for forest research mobilized adequately, there is a greater chance to address the knowledge gaps effectively and in a timely fashion and set research priorities, which in turn will contribute to improving linkages between science and policy processes, promoting efficient sharing of information and strengthening networks and applying participatory mechanisms to integrate research into planning processes.

B. Future international agreements/arrangements and science and technology priorities

20. Science and technology indeed constitute a major asset, which, when properly developed and utilized, can play a vital role in the formulation and implementation of forest policy for sustainable forest management. This has been already recognized in Agenda 21 (see chaps. 31 and 35) and by the United Nations Forum on Forests, which included forest-related scientific knowledge in the agenda of its fourth session.

21. Future international agreements and arrangements need to go further in recognizing the importance of science and technology by seriously considering ways to facilitate research capacity-building and to mobilize funding for research in order to unlock the potential for scientific information and appropriate technologies to contribute to sustainable development. The following suggestions are ways for future international arrangements on forests to better address these urgent proposals:

(a) Find innovative ways to reduce the debt burden of developing countries so as to channel funds into sustainable management of natural resources, including scientific knowledge development as viable support for the process;

(b) Increase donor interest in collaborative initiatives, which could help advance implementation of the urgent proposals through effective flows of information at all levels of decision-making, and especially increase the awareness of policy makers, landowners, communities and representatives outside the forest sector;

[3] See: M. J. Spilsbury, et al. (2004), "Forest-related Research Capacity in Eastern Africa: Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda". 2004. FAO, CIFOR, African Evaluation Association research report.

(c) Help countries with proper valuation of forest products and services so as to achieve wealth production through the sustainable utilization of forest resources;

(d) Consider some scheme to affect payments for environmental services as key instruments in transferring financial resources to local communities and providing real opportunities for rural people to benefit from the processing and marketing of non-wood forest products and ecotourism.

IV. Recommendations regarding achievable goals and targets

22. **Given the low implementation levels of the IPF/IFF proposals for action on the ground (at the national and subnational levels) and the need to address effectively the most urgent proposals identified above, the following goals and targets ought to be set for the international community:**

(a) **By 2010, ensure that all forest-related research organizations in economically disadvantaged countries are connected to the Internet so as to improve access to information, improve communications and enable greater collaborative efforts. Support for national and regional research networks and their communication infrastructure should be a key component in related investments;**

(b) **By 2020, reduce poverty in developing nations by 50 per cent through a number of vigorous and coordinated national and international actions, including debt relief measures, fair trade in agricultural products, rural livelihood improvement through electrification, road construction and market development, and health and clean water projects. Research should play a crucial role in this process. Poverty is the driving force in land degradation and unsustainable land use practices and forest resources utilization. Unless rural poverty is significantly reduced, sustainable management of land and forest resources may never be achieved. This objective is part of the Millennium Development Goals, already on the global agenda, and thus could easily win acceptance in the international community;**

(c) **Achieve agreement on an international common forests/natural resources fund to which each developed nation will contribute an agreed upon amount weighted by its contribution to global warming. Developing countries will contribute to this fund a percentage of their external debt payments. These funds will serve to build forest research capacities in developing countries and finance the removal of all major obstacles to the implementation of proposals for action from international agreements and arrangements on forests. This goal is achievable since it is in line with the Kyoto Protocol. It does not require countries to reduce their emission levels, but rather to compensate the world for the damage they cause to the environment. It is fair and objective and could discourage increased pollution while contributing to mobilizing the financial means needed to successfully achieve a satisfactory level of sustainable forest management of the world's forest heritage;**

(d) **Establish a window at the Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) for special loans at near-zero interest for investments in sustainable natural resources management and capacity-building and research in support of the implementation of proposals**

for action on international agreements and arrangements, such as the IPF/IFF proposals. This is in line with the original purpose of setting up these financial institutions, in response to a major challenge facing the world after the First and Second World Wars. Today, the sustainable management of the world's forests and forest resources is one of the greatest challenges facing the world. One could successfully argue that as was the case after the First and Second World Wars, the Bretton Woods institutions should be positioned to take on the new challenges of the Millennium Development Goals.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

23. Achieving sustainable management of the world's forests and forest resources is certainly one of the greatest challenges facing the world today. If the international community holds this truth to be self-evident, then courageous actions should be taken, including bringing scientific and technological knowledge to bear in facing this challenge. The international community should consider various drastic recommendations, including putting real power behind the suggested proposals on international arrangements in order to facilitate their implementation at the local level. With regard to the proposals for action related to science and technology, it is recommended that:

(a) The international community press for actions to invest in building forest research capacities and support research networks and activities, in particular in economically disadvantaged countries, so that science and research can make a difference in real-life problems through the timely delivery of utilizable research-based solutions;

(b) The international community press for actions to support FAO, IUFRO, regional forest research networks and other international organizations involved in building forest research capacities, improving communications, sharing information and networking between forest scientists, research institutions, policy makers and other stakeholders in the forest sector and other land-based sectors;

(c) The international community press for actions to achieve agreement for the establishment of an international forestry fund, to which developed nations should contribute a certain percentage of their GNP in relation to their propensity to contribute to global warming, while developing countries should contribute from their external debt payments;

(d) The international community press for actions to support the Bretton Woods institutions in setting up appropriate financial facilities in support of sustainable management of natural resources in general and forests in particular.